

Rusk Testimony Denies Retaliation on Otepka

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

By CECIL HOLLAND
Star Staff Writer

Secretary of State Dean Rusk assured investigating Senators nearly two years ago that charges were "not brought in retaliation" against Otto F. Otepka, the department's top security evaluator, for his testimony before them.

This was revealed with the release yesterday by the Senate Internal Security subcommittee of the fourth volume of testimony bearing on the controversial case.

It is still pending and Otepka is scheduled to have a hearing Oct. 11 on his appeal from his dismissal. He has remained on the payroll at more than \$19,000 a year pending a final decision in the case.

Rusk's statement was made in the course of what appeared from the transcript of testimony to have been a long and extraordinary appearance before the subcommittee. The Secretary, who testified Oct. 21, 1963, said he wanted to "clear away the underbrush of misunderstanding" which had developed between the department and the subcommittee over the case.

Deputy Testified

The testimony and exchanges between Rusk and subcommittee members indicated all the misunderstanding was not cleared away.

From a more recent witness, Deputy Undersecretary of State William J. Crockett, the subcommittee heard that Rusk considered the Otepka matter as "his case." Crockett, who appeared before the subcommittee last May 4, said the Secretary personally ordered charges brought against Otepka and eventually his dismissal.

He said Rusk has a "deep

personal interest" in the case and there is "no one . . . who wants to see justice done more than he." Since ordering the charges brought, Crockett added, Rusk has taken no part in the matter since it will be up to him to make a final determination.

Rusk, in his testimony, said that he became concerned about Otepka's alleged activities because the evidence seemed "to present serious questions of security in the department." Subsequently, he added, Otepka was accused of supplying Jay G. Sourwine, subcommittee counsel, with classified information concerning the loyalty of prospective appointees, of furnishing questions for Sourwine's use in questioning his superiors, and with mutilating official documents.

Otepka, it was brought out, acknowledged the first two charges and has denied the third.

When Rusk protested "unauthorized underground relations" between the subcommittee and State Department officials, Senators emphasized that Otepka was asked questions and asked to supply questions for the subcommittee to use. "What's wrong with it?" Sen. John L. McClellan, D-Ark., demanded at one point.

Rusk, who was seeking to get guidelines established for such an inquiry, spoke of "an erosion of confidence among people who are working at adjoining desks" in the department because "they do not know whether they can give confidence to each other or not. He said he hoped he and the subcommittee could work together "so we do not have these shadows lurking over the department so people cannot trust their own colleagues and deal in good faith."